

MEDIA RELEASE

Pirates face new resistance as navies strike back, says ICC

Paris, 15 July 2010

While Somali pirates demonstrated increased range and capabilities, there has been a relative decline in pirate attacks worldwide for the first two quarters of 2010, according to a report issued today by the International Chamber of Commerce's International Maritime Bureau (IMB). A total of 196 incidents around the world were recorded by the IMB's Piracy Reporting Centre, compared to 240 incidents in 2009. This includes 31 vessels hijacked, 48 vessels fired upon and 70 vessels boarded.

During this period, one crew member was killed, 597 crew members were taken hostage and 16 were injured. The use of firearms, including rocket propelled grenades, was particularly marked in the waters off Somalia and in the Gulf of Aden. Attacks in this region and in the Red Sea represent more than half of the incidents reported over the past six months.

The coast of Somalia remains particularly vulnerable with 100 pirate attacks in 2010, including 27 hijackings. The number of attacks have decreased compared to 2009 in the most dangerous maritime area of the world.

Somali waters continue to pose the greatest threat to vessels: In 2009, pirate activity in the region accounted for more than half of all acts reported during the year. Whereas attacks off the Somali coast remain considerable, these have moved progressively from the Gulf of Aden towards the east coast; a rising number of high sea incidents has also been reported in the Indian Ocean.

According to IMB Director Pottengal Mukundan, attacks originating on the Somali coast are predominantly dependent on mother ships which enable small pirate boats to attack ships on the high seas. The mother ships and skiffs have been the target of navy vessels operating in the area.

"The actions of the navies in the Gulf of Aden have been instrumental in decreasing the number of attacks there," said Captain Mukundan. "The Indian Ocean poses a different challenge. Nevertheless, naval initiatives to target and disrupt pirate groups in the Indian Ocean should be applauded and sustained. It is vital that the naval presence continues. The other important factor in the number of attacks being brought down is the actions taken by vessels themselves and the adoption of the Best Management Practices put out by industry bodies and the naval co-ordination groups."

He also noted that since October 2009, many reported attacks have occurred up to 1,000 nautical miles off Mogadishu, the Somali capital.

Attempted attacks in the Southern Red Sea represent a new area of activity for Somali pirates. "The commencement of the southwest monsoon has impacted upon their area of operations resulting in increased attacks taking place in the southern part of the Red Sea – an area not directly affected by the monsoons," Captain Mukundan said.

"The IMB strongly urges all shipmasters and owners to report all incidents to the IMB Piracy Reporting Centre. This is the first step in the response chain and vital in ensuring that adequate resources are allocated by governments to deal with the problem," said Captain Mukundan.

All vessels transiting the area are encouraged to follow the industry *Best Management Practice* which may be downloaded from the IMB website www.icc-ccs.org under the Piracy Alert section.

Actual attacks in the South China Sea more than doubled in 2010. Incidents in the waters of Malaysia and Indonesia have increased whereas only one attack was reported in the Singapore Straits and one in the Gulf of Thailand. Incidents in Nigerian waters also declined but remain stable on a six-month basis. Many attacks go unreported in this violent piracy hotspot.

IMB has a dedicated hotline for seafarers and all concerned parties to report any information relating to maritime crime and security including terrorism, piracy and other illegal activities.

The Maritime Security Hotline can be contacted 24 hours a day at:

Tel: + 60 3 2031 0014

E-mail: imbsecurity@icc-ccs.org

IMB offers the latest piracy reports free of charge. To request a PDF version of the report by email, please visit: <http://www.icc-ccs.org/requestreport>

Latest attacks may also be viewed on the IMB Live Piracy Map at :<http://www.icc-ccs.org/livepiracymap>

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